



Alternative Fuel
Information Series

Clean Cities

Award Winning Coalition

May 1999

U.S. DEPARTMENT of ENERGY
OFFICE of ENERGY EFFICIENCY and RENEWABLE ENERGY

Coachella Valley Clean Cities Coalition

Clearing the Air into the 21st Century

The Clean Cities Program was a natural for Coachella Valley, which has long taken an active role in protecting the region's desert environment. Located in Southern California, Coachella Valley officially received its designation as a Clean Cities region in 1996, on Earth Day, April 22.

But the ride to becoming a Clean Cities region actually began several years earlier when SunLine Transit Agency, the regional public transit provider, became the first transit system in the United States to replace its entire fleet with compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. SunLine then approached Southern California Gas Company to install a refueling station and the College of the Desert to develop a curriculum for alternative fuel vehicle (AFV) maintenance. Working together, these organizations built the foundation for what was to become a nationally recognized model in the clean air movement.

Making an Impact

In Coachella Valley, alternative fuels and AFVs have become a part of the daily landscape. Coachella Valley Clean Cities Coalition is made up of nine desert cities, the county of Riverside, four Indian nations, local government agencies, school districts, business leaders, and media.

Today the valley is home to more than 275 AFVs and 15 refueling stations. Some of the most recent successful alternative fuel projects are listed below.

- The U.S. Postal Service operates 192 CNG neighborhood delivery vehicles in the area.
- Desert Sands School District was the first in the state to commit to converting 100% of its fleet to CNG.
- SunLine Transit Agency initiated an alternative fuel taxicab program and currently leases five vehicles to local cab companies.

- The Palm Springs Regional Airport became the first airport in the world to receive the International Clean Airport designation and is converting all of their maintenance vehicles to alternative fuels.

According to regional Clean Cities Coordinator Tracy Daly, "Here in the desert you can ride a CNG transit bus, have your trash picked up by a CNG-powered refuse truck, have your mail delivered by a CNG vehicle, have your street swept by a CNG-fueled street sweeper, rent a CNG car at the airport, have your children ride to school in a CNG school bus, and know your city has alternative fuel in their fleets, too."

Promoting Clean Air Efforts

Coachella Valley Clean Cities is proud of its efforts to clean the air and reduce the nation's dependence on imported oil supplies. They are also proud to share their accomplishments with the community. Winner of the U.S. Department of Energy's 1998 Clean Cities **Madison Avenue Award** for promoting alternative fuels and AFVs, the coalition spreads the word about the benefits of both through a newsletter that is reprinted as a full-page advertisement in the local newspaper. Coachella Valley also sponsors an annual Earth Day



The late Congressman Sonny Bono test-driving a fuel cell golf cart

Photo courtesy of Taylor Sherrill

event and awards ceremony to recognize outstanding regional AFV organizations. Local celebrities present awards and winners appear on regional television.

In 1998, Coachella Valley was featured in a documentary that aired on PBS and *Discovery* entitled "Cleaning the Air." The half-hour program highlighted the region's efforts to improve its air quality and served as an example for other communities interested in doing the same. In addition, local television station KMIR-TV regularly runs public service announcements recognizing outstanding Coachella Valley stakeholders.

Planning for the Future

Coachella Valley will continue to position itself as the destination of choice for advanced transportation technologies, alternative fuel research and development, and job training. Over the next few years, the coalition plans to target advanced transportation businesses to expand in the area, convert public- and private-sector fleets to alternative fuels, build new CNG fueling stations, garner funding for projects, and continue to generate awareness about the Clean Cities Program.

"By protecting the environment, we also protect our economy," said Daly. "Our primary industries—tourism and agriculture—both depend on clear skies, an abundant supply of water, and fertile soil. By making the desert's future environmentally sound, we can also make it economically sound."

About Clean Cities...

The Clean Cities Program is a voluntary, locally based government and industry partnership. The program, now in its sixth year, seeks to expand the use of alternatives to gasoline and diesel fuel in order to reduce dependence on imported oil, lessen air pollution, and increase public awareness about the benefits of using alternative fuels over gasoline and diesel. At least 70 coalitions and some 3,500 stakeholders have joined to support the Clean Cities Program.

Now in their third year, the Clean Cities Coalition Awards recognize outstanding achievements in building coalitions, promoting and increasing alternative fuel vehicle use, developing AFV infrastructure, and supporting alternative fuel and AFV legislation.

For more information, you can

- contact the Clean Cities Coordinator listed below
- call the Clean Cities Hotline at 1-800-CCITIES
- visit the Clean Cities Web site at <http://www.ccities.doe.gov>
or
- e-mail the Clean Cities Hotline at ccities@nrel.gov.

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